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# BULLETIN

## OF

# THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM

## OF ART

VOLUME I

NEW YORK, AUGUST, 1906

NUMBER 9

### A JAPANESE SWORD-GUARD PICTURING A HOLLANDER

IT is clearly recognized that the European influence upon Japan during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was by no means unimportant. And during even the period when the restrictions upon the Dutch "factory" at Deshima allowed only a boat a year to discharge its cargo in Japan, there continued a steady infiltration of European ideas and methods, no less than of trading stuffs.

In this connection it may be said that the collector who visits Japan is constantly coming in touch with early objects of European workmanship, or with early copies of them. One may see, for example, a bit of European flannel carefully worked into the case of some object precious in tea ceremonies;—or be shown among the treasures of a Japanese collector's go-down an eighteenth century baize table cloth, stamped unpleasantly in bright colors, or in shops one may run across an early European button, brooch, painting, primitive watch, or bit of brocade. Among other things, decorated leather found its way into Japan at an early period, and was highly prized, not for screens—it was over costly for that—but as a veneer for tobacco pouches, small cabinets, and for parts of armor. As I write, a pair of "sendan" (arm-pit pieces of a suit of armor) lie before me encased in leather of the coarse-patterned foliate type, which was used as wall hangings in Dutch houses of the seventeenth century. And we have a suspicion that in this, as in similar cases, it was the old-fashioned objects, rejected by the markets of Europe, which found their way into the trading stocks of the India Com-

pany. This was certainly true in the case of European armor; for we have good evidence that not only was it imported into Japan, but that record prices were paid for it—and this after the European demand had subsided in consequence of improvements in fire arms. Thus it is known that the helmets and corselets of daimyos were not infrequently of European origin, although, it appears, always revamped in accordance with Japanese fashion. One may mention in this connection the remarkable head-piece of the great Tokugawa in the temple museum at Nikko, the Dutch cabasset of about 1620, now in the Imperial Museum of Tokyo—parts of the suit of a daimyo of Arima in the possession of Mr. Louis B. McCagg of this city, and several head-pieces collected by the writer.

Entire suits of European armor were undoubtedly imported. One richly decorated was secured not long ago by a collector in Tokyo, who sent it back to Europe, and it was later sold (1891) among the objects of the Chateau Acquabella, Florence. I have myself found at different points in Japan fragments of gold damaskeened German armor, which had been broken up to form ornaments for tobacco boxes!

Swords appear to have been rarely imported: their shape made them unsuited for Japanese use, nor was their material desirable—the native blades never having been surpassed.

It is a curious, and not altogether a flattering fact—from the Western standpoint—that European *figures* or *faces* rarely find their way into sixteenth, seventeenth or eighteenth century Japanese art. Exceptional is the figure, probably of a Portuguese, pictured by Huish, in the Sir Trevor Lawrence col-

lection: and rare, also, are eighteenth century prints which appear to have been based upon European models; and among the thousands of richly decorated sword-guards of this period one seeks in vain for figures of Europeans. Such, at least, had been the writer's experience, until he happened to examine a collection of guards at Noetsu, in the province of Echigo. Here he discovered a guard decorated with a figure which the Japanese collector pronounced a "Corean," but which was an obvious Hollander. And it even tells us what manner of man was this early trader at Nagasaki: he wore a curly wig, a three-cornered hat surmounted by a tuft of feathers, a broad-bottomed coat with silver buttons, a wide cuff, and ruffles at his throat and wrists. The tobacco pipe he carried is of Hollandish length, although its decoration is Japanese, and he led a spaniel, of the small, spotted kind, which was just becoming known in Europe as a "King Charles." The guard dates apparently from the early eighteenth century, and from its decoration we may query whether its material is the "namban tetsu," foreign iron, which at that time had become famous in Japan for the making of armor.

B. D.

## GREEK JEWELRY

THE Museum has recently purchased, out of the income of the Rogers Fund, a number of pieces of ancient Greek jewelry which are of extraordinary beauty and importance, and which have an added interest from the fact that they are all said

to have been found in the same grave. These are now on exhibition in the Gold Room, and are illustrated in the accompanying plates. They include a diadem, a necklace, a pair of earrings, a finger ring, seven rosettes in the form of small flowers,

and nineteen beads from a necklace, all of them being of the pure yellow gold which was customarily used by the Greeks for their coins and for the better class of their jewelry.

Technical characteristics both of the design and the execution, make it possible to date these in the fourth century B.C., and probably not later than the middle of the century. They therefore represent the art of the Greek goldsmiths at the highest stage

of its development, and they do this not unworthily. For, while none of them (with the possible exception of the rosettes) is unique in the strict sense of the word, yet all exhibit a perfection of workmanship which is not surpassed by similar examples in any other collection; and one has only to examine them carefully to understand why the Greek women, with the keen instinct for beauty which distinguished their race, should have preferred specimens of such delicate craftsmanship for their personal adornment, rather than the mere glitter of precious stones.

THE DIADEM consists of a very thin plate of gold,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches long and  $2\frac{1}{8}$  inches wide at the point in the middle ( $.368 \times .06$  m.). Its decorations are entirely of repoussé work, hammered into low but carefully modelled reliefs. In the middle the youthful Dionysos and Ariadne are sitting back to back, their faces turned toward each



JAPANESE SWORD-GUARD PICTURING A EUROPEAN  
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